

~~Dear Council~~

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Dear Council Members and Planning Board,

RE: Support for Barrett, et al. Petition (Accessory Apartments and Basement Space)

There are very few ideas that are both elegant and simple by their nature to solve multiple problems. The common sense idea in this petition is one of those rare instances where the elegant solution proposed in this petition could help Cambridge on multiple fronts.

Here are just some of the reasons we have chosen to support this petition:

- 1) Helps generate income and economic activity—homeowner do it yourselfers, jobs for contractors, plumbers, electricians, city personnel, masons, concrete specialists etc.
- 2) Help keep the bread and butter of Cambridge i.e. college students stay in Cambridge. Due to high rents, many grad students who cannot get housing via their schools in Cambridge have to live outside Cambridge. Due to their transient nature, students will be the best renters for the basement units since these units cannot command market prices due to their very nature of being basement units. Let's jumpstart the keep the Students movement right here and now.
- 3) Increased overall Affordable housing. Cambridge does a great job on affordable housing and this is another avenue to grow affordable housing stock that already exists without more building or killing green spaces or building more towers.
- 4) Incentives are created to take existing unused spaces and turn them into usable spaces. Finally, all those basements that are falling apart can be fixed into something useful and more aesthetically pleasing thus making Cambridge better looking therefore increasing property values, taxes, and makes it more attractive place to live and work.
- 5) Cambridge has to stay competitive, this is another opportunity to help improve Cambridge so it can best provide affordable resources for its denizens, both permanent and temporary Cantabridgians will have more choices.
- 6) Help elderly or low income residents who own their own houses generate more income. After the rent control increase, many folks have seen the value of their homes increase; taxes increase etc and now will have a way to generate some extra income to help make ends meet.
- 7) It is progressively liberal in the sense that it gives the home owner more options in how they choose to use their space that has minimal effect on their neighbors.
- 8) Naturally fosters a closer sense of community since living density increases providing more human on human interactions. Essentially makes Cambridge more vibrant and interesting.

In the 35 years of combined living in Cambridge, my wife Catherine and I think this is one of the best common sense ideas we ever heard that improves Cambridge and provides benefits to all concerned with no downside.

Sincerely,

Kiril and Catherine Alexandrov, 406 Franklin Street, Cambridge, MA 02139

Serial Entrepreneur: Founder of the Boston Book Review/Harvard Readers Guild, Genigma Biotech, the International Economic Alliance, Big Skinny Wallets, and Gorilla Gym.